APHIS – Plant Protection and Quarantine
Texas Department of Agriculture
Daily Situation Report: Panicle Rice Mite (PRM)
August 3-4, 2007

Updates in red

Survey and Diagnostics Information:

- **Survey**
  - Survey teams continue to implement a rigorous detection and delimiting survey for the Panicle Rice Mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, in and around a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas.
  - A total of 117 sites (10 greenhouses; 19 research fields; 1 compost pile; and 87 commercial production fields), have been surveyed to date.
  - On August 4, approximately 190 acres were sampled from a seed farm in Jackson County, TX. All samples from this facility were negative.

- **Identification and Diagnostics**
  - Initial identification is conducted at the PPQ Plant Inspection Station in Huston, TX. Samples are forwarded to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) in Washington, DC, for confirmation.
  - Since the initial detection in 1 of the greenhouses at the rice research facility, additional PRM detections have occurred at 3 other greenhouses, 5 research fields, 1 compost pile, and 5 commercial production fields, all located at the research facility in TX.
  - On August 1, a rice field in Puerto Rico, operated by the same research facility in TX, was confirmed positive for PRM.

Operational Update:

- **Technical Working Group (TWG)**
  - APHIS has established a technical working group (TWG) of experts to discuss survey and control strategies in response to PRM. The group will continue to meet on a regular basis to address this developing situation and consider mitigation strategies.

- **Incident Command**
  - A total of 14 personnel are on-site (2-TDA and 12-APHIS).

- **Regulatory Actions**
  - APHIS has issued an Emergency Action Notification (EAN) to stop movement of all rice seed, rice plants and plant parts, and farm equipment.

- **Trace-back and Trace-forward**
    - Trace-back and trace-forward investigations to determine the source and potential distribution of PRM continue.

- **Treatment**
    - The infested greenhouses were treated by the rice research facility on July 17 with the insecticide dimethoate to suppress the level of PRM.

    - The rice research facility was granted a 15-day crisis exemption label for the insecticide Curacron. Irrigation water must be drained from all rice fields before treatment commences.

Trade Update:

- APHIS is in the process of informing the NAPPO member countries and other trading partners.

Communication and Outreach:

- SPRO letter was issued on July 24 for the Brazoria County, Texas PRM positive find.

- A meeting with the Texas Rice Industry was held on July 31, to discuss the PRM situation in Brazoria County, Texas. Approximately 20 industry representatives of rice growers in Brazoria County attended an informational meeting hosted by APHIS and TDA. TDA and APHIS personnel gave an overview of survey and regulatory activities, while ARS staff provided a biological overview of the pest. Growers responded positively to a solicitation for volunteer sampling of non research related fields in the county.

Background:

- On July 13, 2007, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) confirmed the detection of panicle rice mite (PRM), *Steneotarsonemus spinki*, at a rice research facility in Alvin, Brazoria County, Texas.

- The research is facility is operated by a private entity, where it conducts hybrid rice research.

- The PRM is considered a serious rice pest in China, Philippines, and Taiwan, where it has caused substantial crop losses. Yield losses can range from 30 to 90 percent.

- In 1997, the pest was detected in the Caribbean region where it is now known to affect Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In 2002, the mite was reported in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and, in 2005, in Colombia. Recent reports also indicate its presence in Mexico.

- Interceptions of this pest have been reported at greenhouses in Ohio and Texas during the last 10 years.

- There are two main reported hosts of RPM, Rice, *Oryza sativa,*and the weedy red rice, *Oryza latifolia.*